

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 01787 291454Z
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UNCLAS SOFIA 1787

FOR EU, PGM/E, PGM/PE, VOA/PE

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: PHOTOGRAPHY USA EXHIBIT/SOFIA-INAL REPORT

1. PERHAPS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL EVENT THE U.S. HAS HELD IN SOFIA, PHOTOGRAPHY USA, CLOSED ITS DOORS ON AUGUST 26. TOTAL ATTENDANCE FOR THE 18-DAY SHOWING WAS 85,194, A RECORD FOR THE SHIPKA GALLERY IN SPITE OF FACT THAT MANY BULGARIANS ON VACATION DURING THIS PERIOD. VISITORS FROM USSR, GDR, CUBA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, GREECE, POLAND AND HUNGARY WERE ALSO NOTICED.

2. LIBRARY WAS FREQUENTED BY APPROXIMATELY 1150 SERIOUS AMATEURS, PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS, JOURNALISTS, STUDENTS FROM THE PHOTOGRAPHY AND CINEMA SCHOOL, AND WORKING PHOTO REPORTERS. MANY REFERRED TO THE TECHNICAL BOOKS, MADE NOTES, AND QUERIED OUR SPECIALISTS.

3. ON AUGUST 25 AMBASSADOR GARTHOFF PRESENTED THE LIBRARY IN A SPECIAL CEREMONY TO PAYO BERBENLIEV, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE. OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE VASIL VULEV, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE BULGARIAN PHOTOGRAPHY STATE CORP.; KOSTADINKA KALABZHIEVA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF "CYRIL AND METHODIUS"

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NATIONAL LIBRARY; IVAN DIMITROV, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INTERNATIONAL CULTURE ACTIVITIES FOR COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE; P&C OFFICER CARLSON AND EXHIBIT FIELD DIRECTOR URSINO. BERBENLIEV, IN ACCEPTING THE GIFT "FROM THE AMERICAN STATE", SAID IT WOULD BE DIVIDED BETWEEN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY AND BULGARIAN PHOTOGRAPHY CORPORATION, AND THAT IT "WILL EVER MORE IMPRINT ON OUR MEMORIES THE

IMPRESSION OF YOUR MAGNIFICENT EXHIBIT AND IT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO NEW FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES."

4. EXHIBIT DIRKTOR WAS FREQUENTLY VISITED DURING SHOWING BY MANY MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, BULGARIAN PHOTOGRAPHY AND BULGARIAN ARTISTS UNION. ALL EXPRESSED HIGH PRAISE OF THE EXHIBIT AND ITS ORGANIZATION.

5. COMMENTS (APPROXIMATELY 850) WERE OVERWHELMINGLY FAVORABLE WITH ONLY EIGHT NEGATIVE REMARKS. SENDING OFFICIAL AIR COMMENT BOOK WITH TRANSLATION AND FINAL REPORT O/A AUGUST 31.

6. SEMINAR WAS A VERY SUCCESSFUL EVENT (SEE SOFIA 1718).

7. PUBLICITY: OFFICIAL OPENING WAS CARRIED ON NATIONW TELEVISION AND NEWS ARTICLES APPEARED IN RABOTNICHESKO DELO, ZEMEDEL'SKO ZNAME, NARODNA CULTURA, SOFIA NEWS IN RUSSIAN, GERMAN, FRENCH AND ENGLISH, AND IN EDNA SEDMICA V SOFIA. AT LEAST FOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS WERE MADE ON BULGARIAN RADIO. 250 POSTERS WERE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF SOFIA.

8. COMPETITION: USSR/MONGOLIAN EXHIBIT WAS SHOWN AT SHIPKA TWO FLOORS ABOVE "PHOTOGRAPHY USA" DURING THE SAME PERIOD. ATTENDANCE SPARSE.

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9. MOST POPULAR EXHIBITS WERE POLAROID, SCIENCE AREA, AND YUKO. HOWEVER, VISITORS WERE INTRIGUED WITH WHOLE EXHIBIT.

10. ON AUGUST 7 AMBASSADOR GARTHOFF WELCOMED NEARLY 300 INVITED GUESTS TO THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF "PHOTOGRAPHY USA" EXHIBIT, THE FIRST AMERICAN EXHIBIT UNDER THE BILATERAL PROGRAM OF EXCHANGES SIGNED LAST YEAR IN WASHINGTON. LEADING BULGARIAN OFFICIALS AT THE OPENING WERE: MARIN YOTOV, DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER; LYUBEN VASILEV, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE; EMIL ALEXANDROV, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE; URAM KHADZHOLYAN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF BULGARIAN PHOTOGRAPHY. (SEE SOFIA 1600).

11. POST REACTION: THE EMBASSY WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH THE PROFESSIONALISM OF THE EXHIBIT AND THE AMERICAN PERSONNEL WHO MADE IT WORK. THAT THIS SHOW WAS SOMETHING NEW FOR SOFIA IS INDICATED BY THE FACT THAT AS WORD GOT AROUND ABOUT "THE AMERICAN SHOW AT SHIPKA", ATTENDANCE GREW DAY BY DAY. THIS SHOW ALSO DREW PRECEDENT SHATTERING COOPERATION AND HELPFULNESS FROM BULGARIAN OFFICIALDOM.

BUT PERHAPS OF MOST IMMEDIATE QE TO THIS EMBASSY IS
VAST RANGE OF NEW CONTACTS WITH THE BULGARIAN ARTISTIC
COMMUNITY WHICH THE EXHIBIT HAS MADE POSSIBLE. AND NOT
LEAST OF THE POSITIVE RESULTS OF THIS EXHIBITION IS THE
WARM FEELINGS OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARD AMERICANS THAT FRANK
URSINO LEAVES BEHIND LONG AFTER THE EXHIBIT IS DISMOUNTED.

12. HUMAN INTEREST: WORD GOT AROUND THAT PHOTOGRAPHY
USA EXHIBIT WAS PHOTOGRAPHING BABIES -- AT TIMES AROUND
THE POLAROID STAND IT SEEMD LIKE A NURSERY WITH BABIES
CRYING AND PARENTS JOSTLING FOR POSIPON.
GARTHOFF

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